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A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY:

REVIEW OF THE PAPER READ BEFORE THE HIGHER DEPARTMENT OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION AT ELMIRA, N. Y., AUG. 5, 1873, BY DR. CHARLES W. ELIOT, LL.D., PRESIDENT OF HARVARD COLLEGE.

BY JOHN W. HOYT,

CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE

[*Read at the Detroit Meeting of the Association, Aug.* 5, 1874.]

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A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY.

The first act of this Association touching the subject of a national university was to declare the conviction that a true university is "a leading want of American education."

This act was not done in a corner. The declaration was made in the hearing of our most famous schools, and in the face of the whole country. It was the unanimous voice of as large a body of distinguished educators as I have ever seen assembled.

The resolution thus adopted provided for the appointment of a national committee to consider how this want should be met, and to report at the next meeting of the Association, in 1870. Owing to the lateness of the date at which the chairman received the list of appointees, the calling a full meeting of the committee could not be attempted. Even correspondence with any but the nearest members was impracticable. The report submitted at Cleveland was only preliminary, therefore, and, by agreement of the few members present at that meeting of the Association, was signed by the chairman alone.

The report presented at the St. Louis meeting, in 1871, sufficiently outlined the institution that was in the minds of the committee, as well as of many other educators who had been consulted, and bore the name of each and every member of the committee present at that meeting of the Association. It did more than to outline the proposed university. It recommended the appointment of "a permanent committee, * * to be charged with the duty of further

conducting the enterprise to a successful issue, whether by means of conference and correspondence, or through the agency of a special convention."

That this second report, after having been read at a full general session of the Association, was adopted without a dissenting voice, should finally silence the absurd, if not insulting, claim set up by an enemy of the enterprise, at the last session — this, namely, that the members of the Association either did not know what they were doing on these several occasions, or that they were so amiable and obliging as to forego the opposition they knew they ought to make to a succession of serious and important propositions which fully committed them to that enterprise before the country and the world.

The permanent National University Committee, thus provided for and duly appointed, proceeded, after a free expression of views in council, to apply the principles approved by the Association to the framing of a bill that should be first submitted to as large a number as practicable of competent friends of education in all portions of the country, for their criticism, and finally be laid before Congress — not with the view of urging immediate action, but rather of getting the subject difinitely before the public, in order that judicious action might the sooner be had.

After the most careful consideration, many conferences and much correspondence between members of the committee and numerous other persons, and the printing and widely circulating of two successive editions of the committee's "draft," a bill was at length presented to Congress, late in the first session of the year 1872. These facts were officially stated by me, in response to a call from the president of the Association, in a meeting of that year, at Boston; on which occasion I also gave an analysis of the bill as introduced, afterwards distributing copies to all who applied for them.

Thus far there had been none to question the fidelity and industry of the committee, and no voice had been uplifted to oppose the object of their labors.

Subsequently, — at the last hour of that same meeting, — when the subject was called up by the president of the Department of Higher Instruction, there was encountered the first opposition with which the measure had been openly met from the beginning.

Strangely enough, that opposition came from a citizen of Massachuetts, a state chiefly distinguished for its early and enlightened legislation in the interest of education, and which to-day claims precedence because of what she has accomplished through a persistent application of the theory that the greatness of a state is best guaranteed by fostering agencies that look to the universal and highest possible education of its people. Stranger still, it came from the neighborhood of Boston, a city everywhere noted for its claims to being the literary, if not the intellectual, centre of America — a city proud of its monuments to Horace Mann. Strangest of all, that opposition came from the oldest college on the western hemisphere, an institution founded by the colonial court, encouraged by municipalities, and fostered by the commonwealth, — and from a man who rose to his present high position as president of that ancient and honored college from the stepping-stone of an institution made preëminent among the technical schools of the country by funds derived from the national bounty.

What course did he take? Appointed, with the assent of a dozen members of a single department of the Association, as one member of a committee of three to report upon the provisions of the pending bill, at the end of a year, without consultation with the other members, of whom I was one, and, so far as is known to me, without the slightest imtimations to either of them of what was

to be its character, he submitted, at Elmira, in 1873, what he styled a "report," but what was, in fact, a sort of castigation of the Association; an artful assault upon the integrity of the committee, more especially of its chairman; a disingenuous and superficial treatment of the committee's draft of a bill; a blind attack upon the whole policy of government aid to education; and finally a most astonishing treatise on the constitution, functions and destiny of the American Republic!

In the years past, I have sought to occupy the time of the Association as little as possible with the subject of a national university, important as I have believed it to be.

At the date of your last meeting, when the president of Harvard made his assault, I was serving my country and the cause of education at the Vienna Exposition, and hence could not speak for either the committee or the cause. If, therefore, on this occasion, I am to speak to you at all, it must be at such length, and with such plainness of speech, as in my judgment the occasion demands.

As the paper of President Eliot is thus far the only open effort at a resistance to the university enterprise, and may be supposed, not only to have covered the whole ground of the opposition, but to have employed every means of attack, perhaps I cannot do the cause better service, at this time, than by pointing out the insecurity of his positions and the meagerness of his forces.

Of President Eliot's reflections upon the Association for allowing itself to be led astray and committed to strange doctrines, I will only say that the Association seems to have submitted to the infliction with a degree of patience and humility that fully entitled it to the mantle of charity, which at length he was so merciful as to throw over its misdeeds.

Nor do I deem it necssary to more than point out the gross injustice of his charge of official action, on my part, independent of the committee. The files of my correspondence; the record of long and fatiguing journeys for the sake of conference, where full meetings could not be held; and the account of heavy expenses incurred, solely in order that whatever it was necessary to do should be done *by the committee*, and with the full concurrence of all its members; these afford the data for a refutation that would move any just antagonist to a suitable apology.

The charge that the committee had been "hasty" in bringing the matter of a national University to the attention of Congress is so absurd as to seem like irony. It is sufficiently answered by these facts: that the subject has been at various times, in many places, and by the foremost educators and statesmen, discussed all along from the foundation of the government down to the present moment; that it was urged upon this Association as long ago as 1860; that at the date of presenting the "tentative" bill to Congress the plan of instruction therein embodied had been three full years in preparation, and had the sanction of a multitude of able educators in all parts of the country; and that, having introduced their bill into both houses of Congress, in order that it might the more certainly attract the attention of interested and competent critics, the committee not only did not urge the matter to an issue, but expressed to the congressional committees, who had it in charge, their wish that no action should be taken until the bill had been thoroughly sifted and well matured.

The same spirit of unfairness is further manifested in that portion of President Eliot's paper which touches upon the substance of the committee's reports and the provisions of their bill. He does not challenge their statement of facts and principles, for he dare not; and

so he makes a fling at the manner of their presentation and adoption. He is unable to find many faults in the provisions of their bill; and hence he lugs in another bill for which they are in no way responsible,* in order that he may multiply his criticisms. Not satisfied with this piece of legerdemain, he so far yields to his desire to discredit the committee, and weaken confidence in the merits and vitality of the measure, as to support his purpose by direct and unqualified misstatements of fact; saying of these bills, without distinction, "They are the work of private individuals only, and nothing has thus far come of them;" and again, "neither bill was supported by anybody in any way, and neither bill has been heard of since it was brought into Congress until this day." Whereas, one of them was the work of a committee of this Association, was warmly supported by influential friends, and had been considered by the House Committee on Education, and, on the 3d of March next preceding his statement, been *unanimously reported back with their approval and cordial recommendation*, as will appear from the following concluding paragraph of that report as published by the House:

"If, then, it be true, as the committee have briefly endeavored to show, that our country is at present wanting in the facilities for the highest culture in many departments of learning; and if it be true that a central university, besides meeting this demand, would quicken, strengthen and systematize the schools of the country from the lowest to the highest; that it would increase the amount and the love of pure learning, now too little appreciated by our people, and so improve the intellectual and social status of the nation; that it would tend to homogenity of sentiment, and thus strengthen the unity and patriotism of the people; that, by gathering at its seat distinguished savants, not only of our own but of other lands, it would eventually make of our national capital the intellectual center of the world, and so help the United States of America to rank first and highest among the enlightened nations of the earth; then is it most manifestly the duty of Congress to establish and amply endow such a university at the earliest possible day.

"The committee, therefore, affirm their approval of the bill and recommend its passage by the House."

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* A bill introduced by Senator Howe as an act of courtesy to another Senator, and without knowledge of either its origin or contents.

President Eliot's discussion of the bill is mainly confined to criticisms on unimportant points, such as the best friends of the general plan might differ upon. No general *principle* of the bill is directly combatted. But he does not make a convincing argument against even the details he attempts to criticise, as I shall briefly show.

Touching the subject of organization, he graciously admits that "the object which the author of this bill had in view * * * was a laudable one, namely, to detach the national university from the national government;" but he cannot see why there should be "one member from each state in a governing board of a university, about which there is nothing sectional, sectarian or partizan." He approves, then, of the principle of non-localization and non-centralization in the government of the university, but disapproves of what is plainly a reasonable, if not the surest, method of *preventing* localization and centralization, while at the same time securing the university from the dangers of sectarian or partizan control, and directly promoting the diffusion of its educational and nationalizing influence. If he cannot see why a like rule of distribution should not apply to the professors as well as to those who are to govern in the general management of the institution, the fault is in his perceptions, and not in the nature of the case.

He disapproves that provision of section 15 which "gives senators and representatives a right to nominate candidates from their states or districts for free scholarships," pronouncing it a "copy of the worst feature of the Academy at West Point." But, with characteristic unfairness, he omits mention of the important provision which, in the same connection, requires that the candidates for such scolarships shall be nominated to the university "on the recommendation of any institution of learning from which they have received their degrees respectively," which "degree," as

provided in a preceding section, must be "*from some institution recognized by the university authorities.*" The security thus given against unfit nominations, and the stimulating influence such a provision would exert upon the faculties and students of the state and local colleges, cannot have escaped even the eye of President Eliot, but a garbled extract suited his purposes better, and hence he stated but half the truth, and the least important half.

In saying of section 13 (which provides that "instruction shall at all times be as nearly free for students as is consistent with the income of the university and the best interests of learning"), "This is a sounding phrase, capable, like not a few other phrases in the bill, of widely differing construction," he touches unwittingly upon a characteristic of the bill which to a man of broad views must strongly commend it. For, while sufficiently definite in all matters in which definiteness is essential, as in organization, rank, location and foundation, it is purposely made general and elastic, so to speak, in those matters relating to the constitution of faculties and of the professoriate, as well as to salaries, tuition, courses, degrees, etc., in order that there may be, in the time to come, all necessary freedom in adapting the university to changing conditions.

His criticism of section 14, which aims at giving the institution rank as a true university—and hence provides that "no person shall be admitted for purposes of regular study and graduation who has not previously received the degree of bachelor of arts, or a degree of equal value, from some institution recognized by the university authorities"—is three-fold: First, it is "singular;" secondly, it "cannot be a serious one," having been "probably intended to quiet the apprehensions of the three hundred institutions which now give the degree of bachelor of arts;" and, thirdly, "if enforced, the regular students of the new

university would be few, except in the professional departments."

Now we admit the singularity of this provision. But therein consists its chief merit. It is exactly because no institution in America has such a provision,—because we have as yet no university, as compared with the European standards, themselves quite below an ideal standard,—that it has been deemed necessary to establish a university. This section contains in fact the essence of the bill, reveals the motive of the entire movement originating with this association. It virtually declares that the institution shall be *for men*, and chiefly for men of disciplined minds, at present unable to find anywhere on this continent the instruction and guidance they crave; not for boys, who are provided for already by the "three hundred institutions" to which President Eliot refers. Moreover, this section 14 is "singular" in a very important respect other than in giving the university the rank of a post-graduate institution: it provides, as will be observed, that the candidate for admission, if looking to a full course and a degree, shall not only come with evidence of preparatory study, but that his degree has been conferred by an institution "*recognized by the university authorities.*" In other words, it requires that the candidate shall have intellectual attainments *fairly* represented by the bachelor's degree, and to that end makes it incumbent on the National University to inquire into the courses of study and conditions of graduation of every institution in the land sending candidates for admission to its high faculties. And who does not see that, in this country, where every state has its own system, and every school of college rank its own standards, such authority lodged in a central institution would become a potent means for the elevation and coördination of all our schools and colleges? Who does not see that the tendency of such a provision would be to give us eventually a grand

national system of education worthy to be called the American system, and that, too, without the intervention of any arbitrary power centralized in the government itself, a thing to which, as a people, we seem to be constitutionally opposed?

As to the number of students who would resort to the university, that, as he admits, is a matter of "judgment." Suppose the number other than "in the professional departments" *would* at first be "few;" is that a sufficient reason why this people should continue for yet other generations to pay tribute to the universities of foreign lands? What if the well-disciplined young men of the country, eager for the high class of instruction to be furnished in the faculties of science, philosophy and letters, should not, at the beginning, number one hundred, or twenty even; shall we therefore deny to these few thirsty spirits the water of intellectual life found only at the highest sources of knowledge and inspiration? And does any one doubt that, if the fountains were once opened, and the invitation given, the number of those seeking them would rapidly increase? Have we not, on the other hand, in the hundreds of young men now seeking such facilities in foreign lands, and in the considerable number found lingering about the halls of our better furnished colleges of this country, for post-graduate study, good evidence that there is at this time a large American demand for university advantages?

Again, would it not be worth something to the *professions*, so-called, to have a footing in this country where they would, not only be free from the temptation to adopt those selfish expedients which at the present cramp and degrade nearly everyone of them, but also have a $\pi o\tilde{\upsilon}\ \sigma\tau\tilde{\omega}$ for uplifting all the professional schools to a higher level? And how much would it not be worth to the new professions of architecture, navigation, engineering, mining and met-

allurgy, agriculture, commerce and finance, and statesmanship, could they all be planted side by side, guided by master hands, and fostered by the nation?

Concerning the detail of location, to which President Eliot directs so much of his effort, the congressional committee's report furnishes a concise and convincing answer, in these words:

"The bill provides that the university shall be established *at the national capital*, where alone can be found convenient neutral ground in which the whole people of the United States have a common interest; where are annually gathered the representatives of every section of the country; where also are resident the representatives of all the foreign powers with whom we have intercourse; where are found to such an extent as nowhere else in this country, most important auxiliaries in the form of the various government establishments, literary, scientific and industrial; and, finally, where alone the government has unquestioned authority to establish and maintain such an institution."

I have done with my review of President Eliot's criticisms on the details of the university bill. No member of the committee has ever claimed it to be without fault. Had they held such an opinion they would not have styled and treated it as "tentative." They are well convinced, however, of the entire conformity of its general features to the principles approved by the Association, and to the conditions that should be fulfilled by a national university.

President Eliot is hardly more fortunate in the field of political philosophy than in that of personal and petty criticism. In attempting to define "the true policy of our government as regards education," he says:

"In almost all the writings about a national university, * * * there will be found the implication, if not the direct assertion, that it is somehow the duty of our government to maintain a magnificent university. * * * It is said that the state is a person, having a conscience and a moral responsibility; that the government is the visible representative of the people's civilization, and the guardian of its honor and its morals, and should be the embodiment of all that is high and good in the people's character and aspirations. This moral person, this corporate representative of a Christian nation has (it is said) high duties and func-

tions commensurate with its great powers, and none more imperative than that of diffusing knowledge and advancing science. * * * The conception of government on which this argument is based is obsolescent everywhere. * * * * Our government is a group of public servants appointed to do certain difficult and important work. It is not the guardian of the nation's morals; it does not necessarily represent the best virtue of the republic, and is not responsible for the national character being itself one of the products of that character. The doctrine of state personality and conscience, and the whole argument to the dignity and moral elevation of a Christian nation's government, as the basis of government duties, are natural enough under Grace-of-God governments, but they find no ground of application to modern republican confederations."

He continues:

"Moreover, for most Americans, these arguments prove a great deal too much; for if they have the least tendency to persuade us that governments should direct any part of secular education, with how much greater force do they apply to the conduct by government of the religious education of the people, (since 'religion is the supreme interest'). * * * We do not admit it to be our duty to establish a national church;" and, "if a beneficent Christian government may rightfully leave the people to provide themselves with religious institutions, surely it may leave them to provide suitable universities for the education of their youth."

It is seldom that a learned writer gets so much of fallacy and falsity into so small a compass. The doctrine here taught is pernicious and dangerous. It not only strips the government of every moral quality, but it aims a deadly blow at that far-seeing and beneficent policy of the American government which from the beginning has steadily sought to insure the perpetuity of a free government, and the wise administration of all its affairs, by first providing for the necessary intelligence of the people. Carry President Eliot's argument to its legitimate conclusion, and every act of the government in setting apart lands for the aid of public schools, as well as for the endowment of our state universities and the recent colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts, was not only unnecessary but unconstitutional, and is therefore void. Had such doctrines had sway, where would have been all our noble state systems of public instruction? where the thousands upon thousands of village and country schools which are now found throughout the entire west, and are fast finding

places in other portions of the country no less needy and yet otherwise unable to supply them? where the state universities of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Mississippi and California, and our new scientific schools, planted, or being established, in nearly every state in the Union?

Is it not *his* argument, rather, that "proves too much."

That the people of the United States, when they repudiated the doctrine of the "divine right of kings," and set up a representative government, at the same time decreed that the government so created was forever divorced from conscience; that all possible duties of the people's representatives are so precisely defined by the constitution as to forbid them the exercise of the least discretion, and hence the prerogatives of moral agents; these are conclusions that might sometimes be hastily drawn if one were to regard simply the deeds of some of our public functionaries, but, as here presented, they are a body of doctrine full of danger to the republic, and sound alarmingly strange when they fall from the lips of a college president.

We may admit that "our government is a group of servants appointed to do certain difficult and important work;" but if President Eliot intends to so limit the term "certain" as to deny to those "servants" any right of judgment whatever, and to relieve them from all moral accountability, — as to deny to them, therefore, such obvious construction of their duties under the constitution, and unmistakably within the scope of its general purpose, as is found essential to the welfare of the nation, and even to the perpetuity of the free institutions the constitution was formed to establish and conserve, — then he is sowing the seed of a heresy which it was hoped had been burned out by the fires of national affliction.

Our government is not the *principal* "guardian of the nation's morals;" but is it to be blind to all moral consid-

erations? and is it to have no concern for the moral well-being of this great people? It does not *always* "represent the best virtue of the republic"—would God that it did!—but it does in some sort represent the virtue of the nation, ordinarily the *average* virtue perhaps; and the nearer it can be brought to a representation of the "*best* virtue" the better for the country and the world. It is not, of course, *wholly* "responsible for the national character, being itself one of the products of that character," but it is nevertheless capable of using its immense delegated powers to elevate or degrade the national character, to brighten or tarnish the "national honor;" and to the full extent of that capability it *is* responsible, and is so held by the God of nations and the best judgment of mankind.

But, if our government were in no sense responsible for the national morals or national character, has not the nation with the point of the bayonet, and with the precious blood of its patriots, written out this solemn verdict—THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS THE GUARDIAN OF THE LIFE OF THE REPUBLIC? And will President Eliot or any other thinking American deny that education, universal and the highest possible, is of vital and pressing importance as a means to that end?

If President Eliot is able to make no broad distinction between the duty of the government to promote the increase of virtue and intelligence, by encouraging the establishment of schools of learning of every grade, from the lowest to the highest, and its duty to support schools for teaching the thousand-and-one conflicting dogmas of all the religious creeds of Christendom, or such one of those creeds as it might assume to be wholly true to the exclusion of all the rest, then it were useless to ply him with arguments. As for the founders of the government and the great body of the American people, they have found

no difficulty in making the proper distinction. But if there were no difficulty in the way of establishing religious schools of every sort, and such schools were granted to be no less necessary than secular schools to the safety of the republic, still is this logic found limping. For *religious* schools are such as can and will be established independent of government aid; whereas, in the case of secular schools, this may or may not be, according to the present intelligence and means of the ruling element in the community.

Having done his best to invalidate the claims of education in general, President Eliot next disposes of the claims of university education in the following summary manner:

"The question of national university or no national university is by no means synonymous with the question—shall the country have university education or not? The only question is, shall we have a university controlled by government, or shall we continue to rely upon universities supported and controlled by other agencies?"

"There is, then, no foundation whatever for the assumption that it is the duty of our government to establish a national university."

And then, as if it were not enough to relieve the government from anything like an obligation in the premises, he ventures to state "one broad reason" why the government is in duty bound *not* to "establish and maintain a university;" and here it is:

"If the people of the United States have any special destiny, any particular function in the world, it is to try and work out, under extraordinarily favorable circumstances the problem of free institutions for a heterogeneous, rich, multitudinous population, spread over a vast territory. Now the habit of being helped by the government, * * * is a most insidious and irresistible enemy of republicanism, * * * for the very essence of republicanism is self-reliance."

Let us look at these two very important propositions.

The first of them is a mere assertion resting on a totally groundless assumption, which makes a rather poor foundation. The work of the university committee began in a totally different fashion. It had its origin in a resolution, I know, but that resolution was grounded on

something like a demonstration that we have, as yet, *no* "*universities* supported and controlled by other agencies" on which to rely — that a university of the highest rank is not only a thing our country is yet wanting, but one that we can hardly hope to secure for the next hundred years without the aid of the government.

No man should know this better than President Eliot. He stands at the head of a college which for more than two hundred years — meanwhile receiving many bequests from philanthropic men, as well as aid from provincial court, municipalities, and state, saying nothing of indirect aid from the general government — has been struggling towards a university standard, and which, nevertheless, to-day sees it afar off. As late as 1868, almost the last words of his distinguished predecessor — words as full of sadness as of truth — were in confirmation of what has just been said. Within recent years, the attempt has been made to take on the semblance of a university by opening what are called university lectures; but, as might have been anticipated, the success of this experiment has not been very encouraging; not because distinguished lecturers have not been ready to serve the cause of learning to a reasonable extent, nor because there have not been persons anxious to undertake university courses, under favorable conditions, but rather because the whole scheme is incomplete and provisional, resting upon no solid and permanent foundation.

I need not go over the list of our highest and strongest American institutions. They are doing the best they can under adverse conditions, many of them doing nobly. But neither names, nor high aspirations, nor even the consecration of a small band of heroic teachers, nor all of these, can of themselves make a great university. There must be added *means* to an extent of which our best equipped schools are but an aggravating suggestion. *There must be*

means — not the stinted means which come of even the most generous private gifts, or are voted by the most liberal legislatures, but such as the nation, with its vast resources, and it only, can give.

There *is* then, a firm and irrefagible "foundation for the assumption that it is the duty of our government to establish a national university."

Now let us consider the "one broad reason why our government should *not* establish and maintain a university."

If the author of this reason, in speaking of "the *problem* of free institutions," would have it understood that he is doubtful whether a popular form of government is the best for our people — that he is, even thus early in our political history looking over his shoulder for "the divine right of kings," — then is he propagating a political heresy for which he must account to the public sentiment of the country. If, however, as is more likely, he means to say simply that it is still a problem how best to administer, and the most surely perpetuate, the free government we have, there are not a few who will agree with him. But it is questionable if even he will deny that one great and primary means to these ends is the education of the people. For if, as he says, "it does by no means follow that an educated and intelligent people will be republican," will he deny that it would be utterly impossible to maintain a republic without intelligence of the citizens? Or will he deny that *the higher the degree* of the public intelligence the greater the probabilty that the people will appreciate their prerogatives and duties? How then does he know that "we deceive ourselves dangerously when we think or speak as if education * * could guarantee republican institutions."? As for myself, I am fully persuaded that a free government is the normal government for civilized men; that in proportion as nations rise in the scale of intelligence

they approach this form. This is the lesson of history; it is also the voice of reason.

Having satisfied himself that education is not essential to the safety of the republic, our author of the "one broad reason" next proceeds to argue that even education, if it cannot be had without the help of government, had better not be had at all. This helping process "saps the foundations of public liberty."

Certainly no American will deny that self-reliance is an essential element of individual manhood, as well as of a noble national character. It is precisely for this reason, among others, that we urge the duty of the government to care for the highest practicable education of the whole people. For there is no dependence so abject as that of a profoundly ignorant man or nation; no self-reliance so complete and royal as that which comes of intelligence. Ignorance is slavery; knowledge is power and independence!

Moreover, by what quirk of logic does President Eliot reach the conclusion that the government of the United States is an independent personality, having powers absolutely its own, and being capable of giving to the people of force and substance they do not in and of themselves possess, thus invading their independence and weakening their self reliance? A little while ago, he was heard saying, "our government is a group of *servants appointed* to do certain difficult and important work;" the people themselves being, of course, the masters, decreeing and doing whatever is done, through and *by* these servants, and hence being in no such sense as is just now claimed separable, either in thought or in fact, from the government. Holding him to this first theory, the most nearly correct of any he has put forth, it will be difficult to see how the public liberty is endangered by the people's servants doing

anything, in harmony with the great charter of the public liberties, which they, the people, need to have done and direct their servants to do in their behalf.

As I understand it, the government of this country is nothing very different from a trusteeship or agency, established by the whole people for public convenience and for permanent as well as present advantage. The constitution is a binding agreement of the people as to the purpose and organization of this agency, the character of the agents to be employed, the manner of their choosing, and the nature and scope of the duties they are to perform.

Cherishing the theory of self-reliance, the people have not usually deemed it duty or wisdom to take of their common substance and give to the individual citizen or the individual state, even where such giving would promote a necessary public object, unless it has seemed very clear that such object could not, or pretty certainly would not, be attained without the national aid. But who will say that the people, acting through this agency, the government, are not both competent and in duty bound to lend the public aid to all such enterprises, not in conflict with express provisions of the constitution, and in acknowledged harmony with its whole spirit and purpose, as are by them, the people, deemed essential to the general welfare, and as are either not possible of accomplishment without that aid, or, being possible, are in great danger of being too long delayed?

Admitting, for the sake of the argument, the full force of the doctrine that "government is * * * not to do a public good even *unless that good be otherwise unattainable*," the argument is still good for nothing against the object we seek to accomplish, since *it* is "a public good otherwise unattainable." Primary schools there would be without public aid; but they would be scattering in location, irregular and inefficient in their work, and, worst of all, utterly

wanting in many cases where most needed. Colleges there would be, as any one may see who looks abroad; but except here and there, where particularly favored with the accumulations of several generations or the princely gift of a noble man, they must of necessity have a sickly life, and do a feeble work. While of a great university, with its vast array of auxiliary establishments, its multitude of learned professors, and its requisite annual income of a million or more, it is hardly necessary to say, the hope of such an institution on any merely private, denominational, or even state, foundation is simply chimerical.

Again, if the question of means were not involved, there is still "one broad reason" why this "public good," the schools the country needs, including the university, are "otherwise unattainable" — this, namely, that if established and maintained in sufficient number, and of every class and rank, by private means, they would still not be *public* schools.

This brings me to the last point in President Eliot's "report" having the semblance of an argument. He asks, with all the apparent sincerity of an anxious enquirer, "What should make a university at the capital of the United States, established and supported by the general government, any more national than any other American university?"

He seems to have suddenly discovered that all his specious arguments against the duty and privilege of the people to do anything through the government in the interest of education are utterly groundless; and so, in his desperation, he unbosoms himself of a single last reason he had preferred to conceal; hoping that local jealousies, if not misrepresentations and sophistry, may defeat the project. He may be properly understood as saying, in substance, if not in these words: "Well, if after all

anything, in harmony with the great charter of the public liberties, which they, the people, need to have done and direct their servants to do in their behalf.

As I understand it, the government of this country is nothing very different from a trusteeship or agency, established by the whole people for public convenience and for permanent as well as present advantage. The constitution is a binding agreement of the people as to the purpose and organization of this agency, the character of the agents to be employed, the manner of their choosing, and the nature and scope of the duties they are to perform.

Cherishing the theory of self-reliance, the people have not usually deemed it duty or wisdom to take of their common substance and give to the individual citizen or the individual state, even where such giving would promote a necessary public object, unless it has seemed very clear that such object could not, or pretty certainly would not, be attained without the national aid. But who will say that the people, acting through this agency, the government, are not both competent and in duty bound to lend the public aid to all such enterprises, not in conflict with express provisions of the constitution, and in acknowledged harmony with its whole spirit and purpose, as are by them, the people, deemed essential to the general welfare, and as are either not possible of accomplishment without that aid, or, being possible, are in great danger of being too long delayed?

Admitting, for the sake of the argument, the full force of the doctrine that "government is * * * not to do a public good even *unless that good be otherwise unattainable*," the argument is still good for nothing against the object we seek to accomplish, since *it* is "a public good otherwise unattainable." Primary schools there would be without public aid; but they would be scattering in location, irregular and inefficient in their work, and, worst of all, utterly

wanting in many cases where most needed. Colleges there would be, as any one may see who looks abroad; but except here and there, where particularly favored with the accumulations of several generations or the princely gift of a noble man, they must of necessity have a sickly life, and do a feeble work. While of a great university, with its vast array of auxiliary establishments, its multitude of learned professors, and its requisite annual income of a million or more, it is hardly necessary to say, the hope of such an institution on any merely private, denominational, or even state, foundation is simply chimerical.

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that I have said to hinder it, the having a national university is foreordained, why establish and maintain it through the agency of the general government? and if that be necessary, why insist on planting it at Washington? Are there not many more important towns than Washington? If one may rely on the census, even Boston is larger! But if it *were* established by the government — that is, by the people's 'servants' for the people, so as to be emphatically *their* university; and were located at the national capital — the common ground of the nation, the centre of national interest, where the purifying, elevating and guiding influence of such an institution would be most directly brought to bear on the national councils and on every branch of the general government, as well as the more easily diffused throughout the country; and if it were controlled in a general way by agents of the people's appointment, and administered by them in the interest of the common country and of republican liberty, as well as in the primary interest of universal truth; — I say, though all these were in fact accomplished, still I do not see how the university so founded, located and administered would be any more national than any other university of the country. I know that Washington, and Madison, and John Quincy Adams, and the present Chief Magistrate, have seen it, but *I* can't see it."

Let us be charitable enough to believe him.

Last of all, invoking ridicule, President Eliot says, "There is something childish in this uneasy hankering for a big university in America."

Indeed! Then let us be curious enough to see who have been the chief hankerers. If, by "hankering," he means a sincere and earnest desire, and he has no occasion for using the word in any other sense in this connection, then they are legion.

Not to make the catalogue too long, we may begin by taking a look into the Federal Convention which framed the constitution of the United States; where are found James Madison, Charles Pinckney and others of the illustrious founders, urging the incorporation into that instrument of a positive provision for the establishment of a national university, and only yielding the point on account of the prevailing opinion that such specific provision was "unnecessary," since the object could be reached under provisions already embraced. These "uneasy" patriots were not long without company; for, as early as 1789, they found another childish hankerer in the person of Geo. Washington, who, in several of his messages, including his first and his last, urged with great force that "nothing could better deserve the patronage of Congress than the promotion of literature and science," and to that end pressed the expediency as well as duty of founding "a national university." More than this, he showed the deep sincerity of his "hankering," by giving a liberal share of his earthly substance, when he prepared to die, in the hope that so handsome a gift, added to his official entreaties, would eventually induce Congress to undertake the fulfillment of this duty.

In 1810, James Madison, having meantime become President, was again seized with an "uneasiness," and hankered worse than ever for a "big university;" pleading with force and eloquence its great importance, and especially dwelling, as did Washington so often, on the harmonizing and nationalizing influence it would exert on the patriotic sentiment of the whole people.

In 1825, John Quincy Adams, while occupying the presidential chair, was taken with the same disorder, and hankered in the same way; and so the importance of a "big university" was yet again urged upon the attention of Congress.

From that date forward, for many years, I remember no recurrence of this troublesome complaint in the presidential office, until at length last December it showed itself, and in a more dangerous form than ever, in President Grant; leading him, not only to press the need of "a big university in America," but even to recommend that a sufficient amount of the public lands be set apart for its endowment.

Nor was this long period between 1825 and 1873 without distinguished hankerers. The interim was an interregnum. The disorder held its ground; seizing, with varying degrees of activity, upon many of the country's ablest scholars and statesmen — such as the lamented Horace Mann, Bishop Potter, Professor Agassiz and Senator Sumner; the still living and illustrious ex-Presidents Henry P. Tappan, Thomas Hill, Mark Hopkins and Barnas Sears, Professor Joseph Henry, of the Smithsonian Institution, President Barnard, now of Columbia, and Admiral Sands, of the National Observatory; numerous members of both houses of Congress; a multitude of our most effective present laborers in the several fields of education, including, among others, the presidents and professors of leading colleges and universities, the heads of many state and city departments of public instruction; and not a few of the most influential journalists of the country.

A large majority of all these have been, and are, not merely hankerers for "a *big* university," but for a *national* university. Indeed, if we say nothing of national, even President Eliot has not escaped. One has but to look into his reports of Harvard College, of late years,— more especially since the matter of a national university has been considerably agitated,— to satisfy himself that few hankerers have ever hankered more for "a big university" than has he.

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It is a matter of some regret that a man so well circumstanced for helping on the needy cause of education should throw himself across the path, not only of this particular movement, but also of the entire work of popular education as approved by the people of the United states and so long carried on successfully with the help of the government. He will learn, however, that he can do but little to hinder it. The government cannot now repudiate or reverse its beneficent educational policy. The logic of facts and of reason will not permit it to stop short of the most complete provision for every department of American education. The people are growing in their realization of the necessity there is for insuring the best possible education of the masses. The variety and vastness of the national resources, and the rapid progress of other nations, are making a strong and growing demand upon the industrial arts, which they are powerless to meet without the help of the best technical schools. While the conspicuous place we of necessity hold among the great nations of the earth, the nature of our government, and the genius and aspirations of our people, are reasons deep and urgent for a high and thorough culture that must early move the nation to adopt measures that will give to the United States a true university.

"*Obsta principiis*" is a watchword too late, in this case, by nearly a hundred years!

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